

along said backbone.



REMARKS

For purposes of expediting the examination of the present case, Applicants provide the following comments to allow the Examiner to better understand the patentable nature of the new claims:

Gregor et al., U.S. Patent 5,280,078

Gregor et al. teaches an assortment of polymers. However, it does not teach a method according to the invention wherein a composition comprising specific hydrophobically-modified polymers is notably allowed to contact a subterranean formation where the polymers are cross-linked to form a gel selectively reducing subterranean aqueous fluids to flow into a well.

The documents cited in the search report of the PCT application do not teach the above features of the invention as well.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the invention claimed in the new independent claim 10 is not anticipated by Gregor et al. or by the documents cited in the PCT search report.

Since claims 11 to 29 depend on claim 10, they are not anticipated by Gregor et al. or by the documents cited in the PCT search report as well.

Claims 10 to 29 also distinguish over Gregor et al. or over the cited documents, since neither Gregor et al., nor said documents, suggest the combined features of the invention claimed in claim 10.

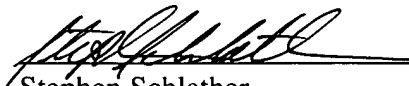
Applicants note that, as indicated in the specification of the invention, some of the advantages in the use of hydrophobically-modified polymers are responsiveness to hydrocarbons resulting in a reduction in the adhesive strength of gels and a retardation of gelation, and solubilization of large organic cross-linking agents.

The subject matter encompassed by the new claims 10 to 29 does not intend to protect a particular composition comprising hydrophobically-modified polymers but a method for reducing a subterranean aqueous fluid flow into a well drilled through a hydrocarbon-bearing formation, said method comprising steps involving a composition comprising specific hydrophobically-modified polymers. As confirmed by the Examiner, the functionalities of the hydrophobically modified polymers, which appear necessary for the implementation of the method of the invention, are clearly defined in the independent claim 10 so that this claim 10 and dependent claims 11 to 29 comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

In light of the amendments to the claims and the remarks relating thereto, Applicants assert that claims 10-29 are now in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees associated with this case to Deposit Account No. 19-0615(57.0272).

Respectfully submitted,



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12/5/02

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